



Kingston United Reformed Church

Elders' Handbook (2020-2021)

[http://www.kingstonurc.org/KURC Elders HANDBOOK.pdf](http://www.kingstonurc.org/KURC_Elders_HANDBOOK.pdf)

(revised July 2020)

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INTRODUCTION

As an expression of their pro-active commitment to Christian values, elders are called upon to make a significant contribution to the life of the church community. There are a variety of specific activities (with both an inward and outward focus) which call for leadership, and elders are also expected to participate at both elders' meetings and Church meetings.

In more detail, the main tasks undertaken by elders are as follows:

1. Giving practical support in church Services and helping them to run smoothly.
2. Attending monthly Elders' meetings, taking part in the church's business and contributing to spiritual leadership.
3. Attending Church meetings and providing a link with the Elders' meeting.
4. Taking a role in one or more of KURC's core and support groups (as described in the Church Handbook).
5. Acting as a trustee, along with the whole eldership, to ensure the resources of the church are used honestly and for the benefit of KURC.

New elders are offered training, support and mentoring, and this little booklet is intended as a practical tool to guide elders through the duties and responsibilities attached to Sunday services. Any comments on its relevance and usefulness would be much appreciated, as would all suggestions for improvements.

At the time of writing, John Watts prepares outline monthly **elders' duty rotas** for the whole year each January and publishes these on the elders' section of KURC website - http://www.kingstonurc.org/kurc_elders.html . Liz Bartlett is the serving elder link with John.

VESTRY ELDER

The vestry elder is responsible for the general smooth running of each Sunday service and to be on hand if the minister/worship leader needs any help or information.



(a) 10.00 and 10.30

Aim to arrive at least 45 minutes before the service is due to start, to give yourself plenty of time for your tasks, and get hold of a copy of the service paper at the back of the sanctuary.

Specifically:

- ◆ Turn on the **sanctuary lights**, ie all the switches, if this has not already been done. The key to the light cupboard is kept in the office.
- ◆ Check that **fire exit doors** at Mayo Hall and minister's vestry are unobstructed.
- ◆ Put **A-boards** outside church and foyer, if they are not already in place. The 'church A-board' is kept at the back of the church; the 'foyer A-boards' in the lift lobby.
- ◆ There will be someone rota'd to operate the **sound system**, but make sure that s/he is aware of any particular circumstances or requirements, especially if there is a visiting minister/worship leader.
- ◆ Fill the **water carafe** (kept in the elders' cupboard in the kitchen) and put it and a glass on the shelf below the minister/worship leader's lectern or where appropriate.
- ◆ Place a **hymn book with service paper** on the minister/worship leader's lectern.
- ◆ Ensure the **offertory platter** (kept in the white sanctuary cupboard) is in place on the communion table or on the small table in front of it.
- ◆ On Communion Sundays, check the **grey armchair** is behind the table, and the **6 grey chairs** in a semi-circle, 3 on either side of the armchair.
- ◆ Take the large **Bible** from the lectern at the front of the sanctuary into the Meeting Room ready to be carried in at the start of the service.
- ◆ Mark the day's **readings** (check with service paper) with bookmarks.
- ◆ Get together with all available elders in the Meeting Room five minutes before the service and **lead the minister/worship leader and elders in prayer**.
- ◆ Wait with the Bible at the back of the sanctuary at the start of the service, while the church secretary or stand-in reads the notices. The

minister/worship leader will then stand, followed by the congregation, which gives you your cue. **Carry the Bible** from the back of the sanctuary to the lectern and place it there, open at the first reading. Walk back down the side aisle.

- ◆ If there isn't a greeter/welcomer by the entrance door, sit there yourself, at an angle so you can see into the vestibule, in case of late arrivals.

If there is to be a **baptism**, check there is water in the font.

(b) 11.30 service

In good time before the service starts, locate the 11.30 worship leader and ask if s/he needs anything. You are responsible for the sound system; it will still be set up from the earlier service. Before the start of the 11.30 service turn the foyer doors to one-way (with key from the office key cupboard) ensuring that people can get out of the building, but not in, through that door. Replace the key in the key cupboard until the end of the service (but see the final point in this section for subsequent action at that time.)

Specifically

- ◆ Make sure the **water carafe** is filled and the glass clean.
- ◆ Put out copies of **service sheet** (11.30 version with general info only) on first couple of rows and ensure copy available to worship leader.
- ◆ Put out two **offertory bags** (from white sanctuary cupboard) so that they are easily accessible to the worship leader.
- ◆ As soon as you have completed all this, stand by the entrance to the sanctuary from the vestibule to **welcome people**.
- ◆ Shortly before the service starts, take the worship leader and musicians to one side and **pray** with them.

At the end of the service:

- ◆ Switch the sound system off at the plug in the wall.
- ◆ Remove the microphone batteries and put them in the battery box in the sound cupboard. Return the microphones themselves to the left-hand cupboard in the communion table
- ◆ Check the **lights** in the sanctuary have all been turned off, but do not alter the setting for switch no 4 which controls the timer for the light on the cross.
- ◆ Clear away the **carafe and glass** and return them to the elders' cupboard in the kitchen

- ◆ Take the **offertory bags** into the minister's vestry and empty them into the cloth bag on the peg beside the minister's gown. Return the bags and offertory platter to the sanctuary cupboard.
- ◆ Take in **A-boards** from sanctuary and foyer entrances.
- ◆ Turn off **foyer screen** display from Centre Manager's office.
- ◆ Turn off **foyer lights**.
- ◆ Before leaving the building check that someone is left who will **lock up**. Otherwise you will need to do this yourself. Retrieve the foyer doors keys from the office key cupboard and switch doors to 'off' position. Lock top Yale lock. Return keys to safe.

(c) Evening service

NB you should arrive at least 30 minutes early to set up for the service.

- position **low table** in front of worship leader's chair
- if it is required by the worship leader, set the **table-top lectern** (from recess under communion table) on low table, facing towards the worship leader
- place a **water carafe** and glass (from the elders' cupboard) on the table
- ensure that there are a **service sheet and hymn book** on the table
- place an **offertory bag** on a chair near the worship leader
- place a service sheet, hymn book and bible on each of the chairs
- reverse all this at end of service.



Specifically:

- ◆ During those months when the service takes place during daylight, put out the 'church **A-board**' in front of the main entrance and remove it at the end.
- ◆ Find out what the worship leader needs.
- ◆ Ensure the **water carafe** and **hymn book** are ready on the worship leader's table.
- ◆ **Pray** with the leader just before the service

At the end of the service:

- ◆ Clear away the **water carafe and glass**
- ◆ Take the **offertory bags** into the minister's vestry and empty them into the cloth bag on peg beside the minister's gown. Return the bags and offertory platter to the sanctuary cupboard.

- ◆ Turn off the air conditioning at the two control panels which are located: opposite the entrance to the ladies toilet and opposite the entrance to the shower.
- ◆ Ensure that all **lights** are turned off and that the **Mayo Hall aircon** is turned off and the **building is locked up** before you leave.

FOYER ELDER – 10.00 / 10.30 (COMBINED) SERVICE

(You are also the ‘Duty Elder’ as defined on page 15. Check the specific responsibilities related to this role listed on pages 15 - 16.)

Be in position 30 minutes before the service begins and, if the plasma screen isn’t on, switch it on in the office, or find someone else to do this.

- ◆ Support the ‘greeters’ in **welcoming people** as they come to the church via the foyer. In particular, identify any newcomers. Make them feel at home, invite them to have coffee after the service and introduce them to a few people.
- ◆ Before the start of the service collect a few **hymn books and service sheets** from the sanctuary to give to people wanting to follow the service from the foyer. Switch on the loudspeaker on the left of the entrance door opposite the coffee bar.
- ◆ Stay in the foyer during the service, greet any further newcomers or late arrivals and make them feel comfortable about coming into the sanctuary. Some people prefer to listen to the service from the foyer, but if they are there during a 10.00 service that includes **communion**, it is usual for the elders serving communion to bring bread and wine to them.
- ◆ You may want to take communion yourself by coming to the rear door of the sanctuary.
- ◆ Collection money. At the end of the 10.00/10.30 service, collect the filled **offertory bags** from the communion table. The money is stored in the safe in the office on first floor. Get the safe key from Lesley Charlton and, with a second person (this can be an elder or church member), take the money upstairs, put the envelopes and cash uncounted in the fabric cash bag. Replace the bag in the safe and lock it. Return the empty offertory bags and tray to the sanctuary cupboard and return the key to Lesley.



COMMUNION DUTIES

Communion is a sacramental feature of our worship in which elders play a significant role. Communion services are normally held three times a month:

- ◆ 10.00 communion on the first Sunday of the month
- ◆ 11.30 communion on the last Sunday of the month
- ◆ 18.30 communion on the third Sunday of the month.



There are additional communion services, for which elders' support is needed, on and around major Christian festivals, especially on Easter Sunday and Christmas Eve.

Six elders are scheduled in the duty rota for 10.00 communion, but only one for other services. The relevant vestry elder should act as back-up (no. 2) for 11.30 communion services but vestry elder and communion elder duties are combined for the 18.30 communion service and in the hands of a single elder.

For the 10.00 service each elder has a number assigned from 1 to 6. This number indicates the position in which elders will sit at the front. Looking from the back of the sanctuary, numbers 1 to 6 sit from left to right respectively, with the minister in the middle.

Preparing communion

Preparation is the same whatever the service. Only the number of plates and trays varies. Elder no. 1 on the rota has the task of preparing before the service and cleaning up afterwards. This is quite a laborious task for one person so **support is needed from no. 2 on the rota, both before and afterwards**. Please allow at least half an hour for this process and time it to finish before the congregation starts to assemble in the church.

If you have not prepared communion before, join another elder with communion duty before it's your turn and work with him/her to get an idea of what is involved.

All the equipment (plates, glasses, chalice) and wine are in the elders' cupboard in the kitchen. Should this be locked, it can be opened with key 10 from the key-safe in the Centre Manager's office. The communion linen is in a nearby drawer.

Checklist for communion elder 1 as follows:

- ◆ Bring in some bread, cut into small squares, plus a whole slice of bread or a bread roll for the minister to break during the service
- ◆ Place the bread squares on the relevant number of plates (6 for 10.00 service; 2-3 for the 11.30; normally one only for evening service) and add a little ‘fish bowl’ containing a few pieces of gluten-free crispbread to each tray. Both the bowls and the crispbread are stored in the elders’ cupboard. As a rule of thumb, 30-ish pieces of bread per plate suffice for morning services and 15-20 for evening service.
- ◆ On a further plate put a whole slice or a roll for the minister to break.
- ◆ If, for any reason, you expect the service to be particularly busy, you can use extra bread or prepare an extra plate to sit at the back of the church as a reserve supply.
- ◆ Pour communion wine into the glasses, using only the outer circle of 18 glasses per tray, but matching the number of trays used to the number of plates as above. Also pour some wine into the chalice. *Inform the church secretary if wine stocks are running low.*
- ◆ Use the little red watering can (also in the cupboard) to do the pouring. Don’t over-fill the cups, for otherwise it can be hard to pick them up without spilling
- ◆ Set the communion table. One large cloth is needed for the table itself while the smaller individual cloths are required to cover the trays (rectangular) and the plates (round), and a small cloth to cover the chalice. Set the minister’s small lectern on the table with the communion chalice/plates/trays.
- ◆ Communion cloths are in a drawer near the elders’ cupboard. Please check these after the service for stains and, if they need washing or ironing, speak to Janine Goddard.
- ◆ Sides-people will place wooden bowls for retiring communion collections at each sanctuary exit.
- ◆ After the service, ensure all the empty glasses are collected from the backs of the chairs. There will be help from other elders and members of the congregation.
- ◆ Communion elders 1 and 2 clear up, wash up and put everything back in place, but here too, help is normally available.
- ◆ Throw away unused wine (don’t decant back into bottles – this makes the wine go sludgy).

Serving communion

10.00 service

Stage 1

Elders scheduled to serve communion should get to the church in time to reassure no.1 elder that they are there.

Stage 2

Before the service starts, no.1 elder should check that the other duty elders are present and know which number they are. Find substitutes from current elders (or from non-serving elders if necessary).

Stage 3

Preparation for communion will usually follow the offertory in the order of service. As the offertory is being collected by the sides-people, the serving elders should gather at the back of the sanctuary by the main doors.

Remember to take your hymn book with you.

NB If you are **not** on duty, keep an eye open at this point, and if you see that there are fewer than the number of elders needed at the back of the church, be prepared to step in if necessary.

As they reach the back of the church the elders walk down the main aisle in pairs as follows:

3	4
2	5
1	6

.....with 3 and 4 in the lead. On reaching the communion table, nos. 3 and 4 should sit next to the minister and those following them sit beside them in the order shown.

Stage 4

When the elders reach the front, those nearest the minister take the lead in removing the cloths covering the elements and place them to one side.

Everyone sits down together.

Stage 5

After the minister has broken the bread, and at the point when s/he picks up the first plate of bread, the elders all rise and receive the plates from the minister. They then serve the congregation, as follows:

(as you look at the congregation from your position at the front)

Number 1 – the right-hand aisle and all in rows to the right
Number 2 – the r-h aisle and those in the first three seats in rows to the left
Number 3 – the central aisle and those in the first three seats to the right
Number 4 – the central aisle and those in the first three seats to the left
Number 5 – the left-hand aisle and those in the first three seats to the right
Number 6 – the l-h aisle and all rows to the left - including the organist.

The most practical way to serve bread and wine is to start with the person furthest away. Those reaching the back first should help by serving people sitting against the rear wall and those in the foyer wishing to take communion.

Stage 6

The elders should regroup by the main doors at the back (in the same order as before) and when everyone has been served, walk back up the main aisle and take their places, standing in front of their chair. The minister will then take their plates in turn. The minister will then take the last plate and serve each of the elders in sequence. The last elder served will then take the plate and serve the minister who will then take the plate and put it down. The bread is normally eaten immediately after being offered. The elders should remain standing at this point.



Stage 7

After the minister has lifted the chalice, s/he will hand each of the elders a tray of wine. Once all the elders have received their tray they serve the congregation, as in Stage 5 above and then regroup, return to the front and continue as in stage 6. Unlike the bread, the wine will be taken together on the minister's invitation. When the minister invites the congregation to pray, the elders can then sit down until the final hymn is announced, when they can return their glasses to a tray.

Stage 8

At the end of the service the minister will give the benediction and then briefly take her/his seat for a few moments of quiet.

11.30 service

Stage 1

When you are on communion duty, arrive in plenty of time to set out the elements.

Stage 2

Before the service starts, make sure the vestry elder is present for support in serving communion and, if not, find another elder to substitute.

Stage 3

As the 11.30 service is less formal and more interactive than traditional worship, check with the minister in advance how s/he plans to stage communion and what part you and the vestry elder will play.

Stage 4

The congregation will be gathered in a more random way in the sanctuary than in more formal services, the two elders being there to shepherd or oversee the trays around the congregation rather than to give the elements out more formally. The trays are then returned to the minister who will serve the two elders, one of whom should then serve the minister.

Evening worship

Communion for evening worship is very low key. As communion elder you are also vestry elder at this service, so arrive in plenty of time to set out the elements as well as make your vestry elder preparations.

Stage 1

The congregation normally sits in a square for this service and, during the hymn immediately preceding the communion, the communion elder moves into a seat beside the minister. If there is no free seat, ask the person(s) there to swap with you. The cloths are removed at this point.

Stage 2

From then on, the communion service is similar to the morning, in that the minister will hand the plate and tray to the elder(s) who will offer the bread and wine to people in turn, including the organist/pianist.

Stage 3

On returning with the plate or tray, the minister serves the elder(s) and the elder(s) serves the minister.

Stage 4

The bread is eaten as soon as it is received and the wine is taken together.

At the end of the service the communion elder is responsible for gathering up the glasses, plates and cloths and clearing up in the kitchen.

GENERAL NOTES FOR ELDERS

Duties and swapping duties

Please make every effort to perform your duties as allocated on the rota.



The 10 minutes before monthly elders' meetings are allocated for "swaps" – you need to be there promptly. If you have a problem at short notice, please swap by emailing/texting fellow elders. Let Liz Bartlett know of any changes and she will ask John Watts to amend the online version.

Before a service

If you are not on duty then please still be aware of newcomers or other people who are looking for other people to talk to. Try to be around in the vestibule, the foyer or the back of the Sanctuary – just to be visible or available for people to talk to – this means being at church well in advance of the start of the service. Elders' prayers are held in Room 3 five minutes before the service. All elders should attend unless they are otherwise engaged elsewhere in, say, the sanctuary or the foyer.

Elders' meetings

These are held at 8pm on the first Tuesday of the month in the Meeting Room. The church secretary circulates an agenda and supporting paperwork. If you cannot make a particular meeting, please let the church secretary or the minister know in advance.

There is sometimes a bring & share supper before an elders' meeting. The task of co-ordinating this is shared amongst the elders.

Church meetings

These are held every other month at 11.30 following the 10.30 service on the second Sunday of the month. Serving elders are expected to attend, as on the agenda there are often recommendations or issues reported from the eldership.

Part of our responsibilities as elders is to provide leadership for the membership and help the church meeting as it seeks to discern the will of God. If you are unable to attend, please send your apologies to the church secretary. Check the agenda beforehand to remind you whether you are due to lead prayers at the start of the meeting or contribute in any other way.

Elders' awayday

This is usually held on a Saturday early in June and is a chance for the new serving and other elders to get together for a day of discussion and meditation on a theme.

Management groups

As part of the church committee structure, each elder is a leader or member of one of KURC's core or support groups, which also involve other church members.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Elders, as church leaders, have a particular duty of care towards fellow members of the congregation and should be familiar with the procedures outlined below.



Emergency evacuation of the church on a Sunday.

This section should be read in conjunction with the ***Emergency Evacuation Plan***, which is pinned in various prominent places and in particular on the notice boards inside the office and next to the green first aid box outside the office. Alongside the Evacuation Plan found on the notice board inside the office, are instructions on how to switch off the fire alarm. Both documents of instructions are also located inside the fire marshal equipment box kept inside the office.

At each Sunday service there will be a Duty Elder as follows:

- ◆ the Mid-Foyer Elder before and during the 10.00 (or 10.30) service and the subsequent refreshment break from 11.00 to 11.30;
- ◆ the relevant Vestry Elder during and after the 11.30 service,
- ◆ the vestry Elder before, during and after the 18.30 service.

The Duty Elder has the following responsibilities

- ◆ Be familiar with the Emergency Evacuation Plan
- ◆ Know where the Emergency Exits are
- ◆ Ensure Sunday School staff or others using the Mayo Hall know where emergency exits are
- ◆ Along with all Elders present, marshal people from the building via the most relevant Fire Exit.
- ◆ Once outside the building, call 999 in the event of Fire or other Emergency (eg terrorist attack)

When the **DUTY ELDER** has left the building, s/he will check that all the known users have also left and be prepared to alert the Emergency Services if any group remains unaccounted for. Only the ground floor is in use during Sunday services.

- 1. The main fire exits are:**
 - a. front doors to the Sanctuary
 - b. electronic street doors to Foyer (NB You can also push them and they will open as long as they haven't been bolted.)
 - c. emergency exit from Mayo Hall. This exit leads to Union Street via a passage in the ground floor of Millennium House
 - d. emergency exit next to Minister's Vestry.
- 2. Break glass fire alarms are located as follows**
 - ◆ Ground floor lift lobby – under alarm panel
 - ◆ West stairs (ie stairs next to lift) – ground, 1st and 2nd floors
 - ◆ East stairs (ie stairs at rear of building) – 1st and 2nd floors
 - ◆ Mayo Hall emergency exit
 - ◆ Basement - bottom of stairs outside crockery storeroom
 - ◆ Ground floor – emergency exit near minister's office
 - ◆ [Roof Plant Room (x3)]
- 3. Fire alarm can be de-activated from the control panel in the Lift Lobby. which can be opened with the key from hook 46 from the keybox in the premises office. Full instructions can be found inside the fire warden box on the shelf immediately outside the office.**
- 4. In the event of a terrorist attack, no fire alarm will sound. People are to exit the building and scatter (hide, go home) and not to gather in a group.**

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